



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/089,474	08/19/2002	Helmut Ulmer	SPM-344-A	1141
7590	03/16/2004		EXAMINER	
Andrew R Basile Young & Basile Suite 624 3001 West Big Weaver Road Troy, MI 48084-3107			RHEE, JANE J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1772	
DATE MAILED: 03/16/2004				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/089,474	Applicant(s) HELMUT ULMER	
	Examiner Jane J Rhee	Art Unit 1772	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 08/5/02. 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

1. Claims 1-2,4-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Leonhard et al. (EP 0767088).

Leonhard et al. discloses a decorative film (figure 2 number 16) which can be foam-backed (figure 2 number 18) used in vehicle interiors (col. 1 line 9) and has in the penetration area of an airbag a break line predetermined by a cross-sectional weakness (figure 1 number 12), the cross sectional weakness being a notch (figure 2 number 28) closed by the material of the decorative film (figure 2 number 16) on the side remote from the foam backing (figure 2 number 18), characterized in that the side of the notch facing the foam backing is closed at the surface by a welded region of an outer layer (Figure 2 number 16), consisting of thermoplastic material, of the decorative film (figure 2 number 16). Leonhard et al. discloses that the cross sectional weakness is a continuous internal notch (figure 2 number 28) following the course of the break line at least partially (col. 3 lines 56-col. 4 line 1). Leonhard et al. discloses that there is a row of a large Leonhard et al. discloses that the decorative film is constructed of at least two layers disposed on the side which can be foam-backed consisting of thermoplastic material (figure 2 number 16,18,20).

Art Unit: 1772

The thermoplastic material skin produced by thermoforming or form-sintering or produced by injection, casting or spraying process is a process limitation, process limitations are given little or no patentable weight. The method of forming the product is not germane to the issue of patentability of the product itself. Further, when the prior art discloses a product which reasonably appears to be either identical with or only slightly different than a product claim in a product-by-process claim, the burden is on the Applicant to present evidence from which the Examiner could reasonably conclude that the claimed product differs in kind from those of the prior art. *In re Brown*, 459 F.2d 531, 173 USPQ 685 (CCPA 1972); *In re Fessman*, 489 F.2d 742, 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974). This burden is NOT discharged solely because the product was derived from a process not known to the prior art. *In re Fessman*, 489 F.2d 742, 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Leonhard et al. in view of Rahmstorf et al. (6106003).

Leonhard et al. discloses the decorative film described above. Leonhard et al. fail to disclose that the cross sectional weakness is a row of a large number of individual internal notches following the course of the break line at least partially. Rahmstorf et al.

Art Unit: 1772

teaches the cross sectional weakness is a row of a large number of individual internal notches following the course of the break line at least partially (col. 5 lines 5-8) for the purpose of improving the technique of tearing open of the cover (col. 4 lines 12-13).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time applicant's invention was made to provide Leonhard et al. with the cross sectional weakness is a row of a large number of individual internal notches following the course of the break line at least partially in order to improve the technique of tearing open of the cover (col. 4 lines 12-13) as taught by Rahmstorf et al.

Conclusion

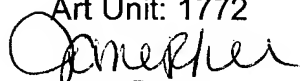
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jane J Rhee whose telephone number is 571-272-1499. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nasser Ahmad can be reached on 571-272-1487. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9306 for regular communications and none for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

Application/Control Number: 10/089,474

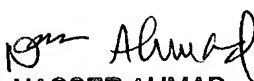
Art Unit: 1772



Jane Rhee

March 3, 2004

Page 5


NASSER AHMAD
PRIMARY EXAMINER